



Testimony before the Public Health Committee on Bill HB 05086
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Chairman Ritter, Chairman Harris and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to speak against HB 5086. I have been a physician assistant practicing in the State of Connecticut since 1992. In 1999, I was appointed by Governor Rowland to the Connecticut Medical Examining Board as its Physician Assistant Member, a seat I held for 6.5 years.

For the record, back in 2003, I testified against HB 6288, sponsored at that time by Representative Fleishmann, for the same reasons I am against HB 5086 now. Currently there are approximately 1400 Physician Assistants licensed to practice medicine with physician supervision in the State of Connecticut, and subject to the oversight of the Medical Examining Board. The proposed changes to the Board would eliminate specific types of appointees, and quite possibly, the one physician assistant seat. Please note that I do not appose the proposed method of appointing new members of the Board, rather the lack of specifics regarding the individuals to be seated on the Board.

There is no mention in this proposed bill of how many members must be physicians, physicians who supervise physician assistants or physician assistants. The current makeup of the board requires that one member must be a physician who supervises physician assistants, and one member of the Board must be a physician assistant. These particular appointees were added to the makeup of the Board in the 1990s, when physician assistants were granted licensure in the State of Connecticut.

During my tenure as the PA Member of the Medical Examining Board, I was asked to outline and clarify the appropriate supervisory relationships between PAs and their supervising MD on many occasions. While most physicians have worked with PAs in the current health care environment, they are often unfamiliar with the PA scope of practice and educational training. If, as this bill suggests, we remove the PA member from the Board, then how will physician assistants be fairly and appropriately disciplined in this state? Ultimately, protecting the Connecticut public requires a mechanism to appropriately oversee the practice of physician assistants, and all health care providers in our State.

Therefore I would recommend this bill be amended to include that at least one member of the Board must be a physician assistant, and one member of the Board must be a physician who supervises physician assistants.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify before the Public Health Committee. I would be happy to entertain any questions you might have.